



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-305726-19

<b>Description</b>	590 no. residential units (279 houses and 311 apartments). Lissywollen, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Section 5 Pre-Application Consultation Request (2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting)		
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> March, 2020	<b>Start Time</b>	11:30am
<b>Location</b>	Offices of An Bord Pleanála	<b>End Time</b>	1:05pm
<b>Chairperson</b>	Tom Rabbette	<b>E.O.</b>	Hannah Cullen

### Representing An Bord Pleanála:

Tom Rabbette, Assistant Director of Planning
Una O'Neill, Senior Planning Inspector
Hannah Cullen, Executive Officer

### Representing Prospective Applicant: (via Microsoft Teams)

David Smith, Architect Delphi Design
Tracy Armstrong, Planner Delphi Design
Alan Fenton, Planner Delphi Design
Thomas Jennings, Roads/Traffic Engineer DBFL
Ronan MacDiarmada, Landscape Architect, RMDA

### Representing Planning Authority (via Microsoft Teams)

Cathaldus Hartin, Senior Planner
Lorraine Middleton, Executive Planner
Paul Hogan, Senior Executive Architect
Damien Grennan, Senior Engineer
PJ Carey, Senior Executive Engineer

## **Introduction**

The representatives of An Bord Pleanála (ABP) welcomed the prospective applicant, Planning Authority (PA) and introductions were made. **This meeting was carried out online by all parties using Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19.** The procedural matters relating to the meeting were as follows:

- The written record will be placed on the pre-application consultation file and will be made public, along with that file, should an application arise following the conclusion of this consultation process,
- ABP received a submission from the PA on **27<sup>th</sup> March 2020**, providing the records of consultations held pursuant to section 247 and its written opinion of considerations related to proper planning and sustainable development that may have a bearing on ABP's decision,
- The consultation meeting will not involve a merits-based assessment of the proposed development,
- The meeting will focus on key site-specific issues at strategic overview level, and whether the documents submitted require further consideration and/or amendment in order to constitute a reasonable basis for an application,
- Key considerations will be examined in the context of the statutory development plan for the area and section 28 Ministerial Guidelines where relevant,
- A reminder that neither the holding of a consultation or the forming of an opinion shall prejudice ABP or the PA concerned in relation to any other of their respective functions under the Planning Acts or any other enactments and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

The ABP representatives acknowledged the letter dated **18<sup>th</sup> October 2019**, formally requesting pre-application consultations with ABP. Prospective applicant advised of the need to comply with definition of SHD as set out in the Act of 2016, in relation to thresholds of development. It was also noted that the Inspector dealing with the pre-application consultation request would be different to who would deal with the application when it was submitted. Recording of the meeting is prohibited.

## **Agenda**

- 1. Development Strategy for the site to include discussion on overall layout and urban design approach – rationale for maintaining route of east-west Avenue; interface of buildings with the Avenue; positioning/scale/definition of open space along the Avenue and across the scheme; DMURS and length of straight stretches of street; net area calculation and query over exclusions.**
- 2. Urban Design Issues, including perimeter block designs and lack of variation in house typologies to address corners/blank elevations/high walls to streetscape/open space; proximity of apartment/duplex blocks to each other and sunlight/daylight analysis; dominance of car parking; level of in-curtilage parking and impact on width of streets; overall landscape strategy and design/location of proposed 'urban squares'.**
- 3. Pedestrian/Cyclist link from the School to the Old Rail Trail.**
- 4. Rationale for delivery of a segregated cycle route and compliance with the National Cycle Manual.**
- 5. Any Other Matters.**

**1. Development Strategy for the site to include discussion on overall layout and urban design approach – rationale for maintaining route of east-west Avenue; interface of buildings with the Avenue; positioning/scale/definition of open space along the Avenue and across the scheme; DMURS and length of straight stretches of street; net area calculation and query over exclusions.**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> subsequent meeting for this pre-application proposal.
- Changes have been noted, including addition of blocks and underground parking to apartment blocks to northwest.
- Scheme remains very road dominant. Question the rationale for maintaining the route of the east-west Avenue as previously proposed and positioning of proposed central open space along the main Avenue.
- ABC option not fully worked out. However an approach which supports design of streets in line with DMURS is welcome. Query compliance of DMURS in relation to existing east-west avenue design.
- Overall layout at present appears to be dictated by the alignment of the east-west avenue, which has urban design consequences.
- Scope to better define and provide a stronger urban edge to main east-west avenue. Scope also to improve urban edge onto existing open spaces, in particular, a stronger urban edge to the existing open space in Brawney to the NW is required; also better definition and overlooking of secondary existing smaller open space. Open space along northern boundary with N6 is poorly addressed and overlooked along its length, and in northwest corner. All open space requires re-examination in terms of urban edge and overlooking.
- Suggest re-examining the location of the proposed central open space away from the main east-west avenue and re-examining the large scale of this OS. This open space requires a strong urban edge and to be located in a less car dominant environment. Opportunity to incorporate hedgerow in a different layout. Links from this hedgerow to other areas of ecological value/appears fragmented as is?
- Roads are currently 5.5 metres in width, home zones could be narrowed as per DMURS.
- These are just some of the issues noted, wider review of layout in accordance with the Urban Design Manual and DMURS required

**PA comments:**

- Scope for reconfiguration of the open space proposed.
- Objective in the Masterplan is to provide a boulevard type area, improvements are noted.
- Maintenance of the hedgerows could be achieved with the moving of the roads position to the south.
- Appearance to the entrance of the site should be more defined looking.
- Open space that appears between Browney north and south is zoned open space, no development to occur here.

**Prospective Applicants response:**

- North west corner of areas H, J and K redesigned to create a stronger edge, potential to pull buildings forward on to the avenue.
- Scope to include a significant pedestrian crossing in this area.
- Relocation of block F along with parking.

- Road layout can be relooked at.
- Want to maintain public open space between Brawney north and south.
- Creation of more urbanised scheme and junctions.
- Various options have been explored for the alignment to the avenue, scope to do this at the eastern end tightening the area.
- Want to maintain the eastern hedgerow.
- Could narrow the roads to 4.8 metres in the home zones.
- Quantum of parking is to be included for areas C and D, must find alternative location to place these spaces if moved.

**Further ABP comments:**

- Encourage more conversation between the applicant and the planning authority in relation to street layout and urban design.
- Put forward arguments/rationale for the size of the proposed open space.
- Boundary plan highlights the issues which exist in terms of urban edge, overlooking and passive surveillance.
- Net open space area, details to be provided of what is excluded and calculation – drawing not clear.

**Further Planning Authority comments:**

- Elevations and 3D imagery should be provided with the application when lodged.
- There are still issues to be resolved with the central green space.
- There is an opportunity to re-align the road, we welcome ideas and further discussions with the applicant.
- Scheme must ensure compliance with DMURS.

**Further Prospective Applicants comments:**

- We will relook at the buffer space between the housing and the main road giving more of a street frontage to clusters of houses.

**2. Urban Design Issues, including perimeter block designs and lack of variation in house typologies to address corners/blank elevations/high walls to streetscape/open space; proximity of apartment/duplex blocks to each other and sunlight/daylight analysis; dominance of car parking; level of in-curtilage parking and impact on width of streets; overall landscape strategy and design/location of proposed ‘urban squares’.**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- Urban square areas not coming across as such in the scheme; they appear to be raised road crossings.
- Perimeter block design not fully resolved, as highlighted by the boundary drawing submitted which indicates in certain locations the dominance of boundary walls to the street/lack of passive surveillance, etc. Opportunity to incorporate a different unit type to address problematic areas in the perimeter blocks, eg shallow form, L shaped to turn corners etc.
- More information is required in relation to the design of apartments and gable end houses, elevation treatments, and addressing of streetscape.
- Proximity of blocks to each other – sunlight daylight analysis. Consider vistas, positioning of blocks relative to existing dwellings.

- Breakdown needed for the active open spaces. This development is going to generate a large population, which will require a range of open space/play provisions.
- Communal parking at areas C and D appears problematic. This block/street/parking layout is not fully resolved.
- Dominance of parking in the scheme overall, in particular in areas M, N and C.

**PA comments:**

- Orientation of the apartments to provide better urban form.
- This is land with huge potential.

**Prospective Applicants response:**

- Conscious of the issue with urban squares, will try to introduce more of an urban form to the open space.
- Sun/daylight analysis between blocks will be submitted at application stage.
- Will engage further with the planning authority regarding garden spacing/distancing.

**Further ABP comments:**

- Additional house typologies and revised block forms required.

**3. Pedestrian/Cyclist link from the School to the Old Rail Trail.**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- Pedestrian/cycle lane could be located on same side of street as the school – consider this further. Streets in this area are dominated by parking.

**PA comments:**

- Pedestrian/ cycle way is a secondary function outside the red line boundary.
- Stride scheme will be used to serve the secondary schools from the northwest, the widths of footpaths and cycleway should be maximised here.

**Prospective Applicants response:**

- The location of the pedestrian/cycle link was the most logical choice at the time.
- Further discussions can be had with the planning authority to see can the area in front of the school can be taken into the red line boundary.

**4. Rationale for delivery of a segregated cycle route and compliance with the National Cycle Manual.**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- Functionality of the segregated cycle route in the proposed development, who will it serve? Refer to National Cycle Manual in relation to the design.

**PA comments:**

- It is mentioned in the Lissywollen framework plan to form a cycle route or further links.

**Prospective Applicants response:**

- The cycle route runs from west to east, it has since been moved to the north.

## 5. Any Other Matters.

### ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:

- Proposed development requires character areas; high quality design; quality materials and finishes; consider level of render for apartments. From images submitted, it is difficult to determine the quality of the scheme, may want to re-examine the photomontages submitted to demonstrate type of place you are creating.
- Finishes and materials are important, further details required.
- There are benefits to the ABC option, however, what is presented is a preliminary design proposal and further detailed work in consultation with the Planning Authority is required.

### PA comments:

- Potential to break up the layout of the road at the south however further discussion will need to be had first with the applicant.
- Road layout agreed to is not adopting to the urban form currently.
- There is no part 8, the scheme and the road to be designed in parallel, there is flexibility.

### Prospective Applicants response:

- Relocation of the apartment blocks to the west and east of the site along with their orientation to the avenue location.
- There have been further discussions between our design team and the planning authority.

### Further ABP comments:

- A lot more engagement to be had between the two parties.
- More scope for improvement in the scheme overall.

### Conclusions:

#### The representatives of ABP emphasised the following:

- There should be no delay in making the planning application once the public notice has been published
- Sample notices, application form and procedures are available on the ABP website
- Irish Water would like prospective applicants to contact Irish Water at [cdsdesignqa@water.ie](mailto:cdsdesignqa@water.ie) **between the Pre-Application Consultation and Application stages**, to confirm details of their proposed development and their proposed design.
- The email address to which applicants should send their **applications** to Irish Water as a prescribed body is [spatialplanning@water.ie](mailto:spatialplanning@water.ie)

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Tom Rabbette  
Assistant Director of Planning  
May, 2020